How to Efficiently Control the Title and Registration Mail-in Workload Backlog Processing

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Certificate of Public Manager through the State of South Carolina

Approved January 12, 2016

Introduction

South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV) is more technologically progressive than the DMVs in the past and we are better equipped today than in earlier years. We currently have 68 branch offices across the state and new branch offices are opening up in our most populated areas to better facilitate the growing economy. We have advanced and reached out to our customers by having them conduct most of their business now online. Our current SCDMV is now offering services that we could never have imagined in past years. We have come a long way and continue to push forward in providing quality customer service. The SCDMV has a logo that displays three C's and it is what we, as an organization, try to uphold on a daily basis. The three C's in our logo stands for Committed, Courteous and Competent and are all key elements in our daily business processes.

Let me begin by saying how I recognize the importance of SCDMV's three C's. By recognizing its importance, my department will do what it takes to uphold the integrity of the organization. Although we have 68 branch offices across the state where customers can physically go into and conduct their DMV business, we have our Titles and Registration Mail-In Unit department located here at Headquarters (HQ) where everything is done by mailed in transactions. Although the HQ conducts several types of business transactions such as driver's license, suspensions, financial responsibility actions, title work and registration processing, our Titles and Registration Mail-In Unit (from this point known as T&R) only processes title and registration work that has been mailed in.

The title and registration work that is mailed in to HQ and broken down and delivered to T&R on a daily basis consist of the following titling and registration processes:

- Title Only: customers mailing in titles to get the owner's name attached to the vehicle and place on the title as proof of ownership.
- Lien Recordings: banks mailing in titles to have their lien perfected on the owner's title as a record that the bank now holds a lien interest on the vehicle until the bank's loan is paid in full.
- Duplicate Titles: customers who have lost their titles and are requesting another
 SC title so that they can conduct further vehicle business.
- Title Corrections: customers mailing in titles to get an error either they made or the DMV made on the make, model, odometer reading, owner's name...etc. corrected.
- Registration Work: customers applying for a new registration, plate replacements and exchanges, duplicate registration cards, golf cart permits, or registration renewals.

To ensure the T&R process provides quality and prompt services to our customers, our goal is always to increase our efficiency in our production while conducting meaningful training to our employees which increases their DMV processing knowledge. This is a number one priority every day within our department and consistently will be our objective. Our goals are to efficiently and expeditiously process one title and one registration at a time.

Problem Statement:

I'm currently a supervisor of T&R and I supervise up to 15 employees, assign duties, and monitor their workload as well as our mail-in transactions. During my three years as a supervisor I have notice that during the time periods of May through June and November through January, our mail workload backlog becomes overbearing. T&R's backlog processing goal is three to five days. Times have shown that during May through June and November through January, titles and registration mailed in transactions have back logged in excess of 10 days and this becomes overbearing. The overbearing backlog causes the department employees' stress level to rise which causes unscheduled callouts. As a result of employee callouts, the backlog increases even more as well as increasing the workload on their fellow employees.

The backlog workload issue is a hindrance for several reasons. It directly impacts dealerships, lienholders and the citizens of SC with the ability to receive their registration and/or titles within a reasonable timeframe. This also affects our SCDMV Call Center because our customers (citizens, dealerships and lienholders) will often call into our Call Center to check on the status of their application. This causes an increase influx of calls and complaints into our Call Center. It also causes complaints to go to our Constituent Services department that handles SC citizen complaints that come down from the Governor's office. Lastly, it affects other departments within the Titles and Registration Department because by receiving mandatory support from them to assist with our backlog work, we are causing a backlog in their work load as well which causes their morale to sink. As you can see when T&R backlog workload is excessive, it causes a trickle effect up, down and across SCDMV as an agency.

One of our primary goals is to find out why, during certain times of the year, our registration mail-in work load gets backlog to the point that overtime is required and assistance from other departments is needed. Also, we need to find methods on how to prevent this backlog from occurring in the future. During this research I will attempt to find out the cause of this increase backlog during those period, determine what procedures or steps are currently in place and unnecessarily creating needless work that has a direct correlation with the backlog and deploy a recommendation that will totally eliminate peak time backlog work loads. By performing within the recommendations, our hope is the backlog end result goal of 3 to 5 business days will not just happen periodically but should stay consistent throughout the year. Finally, it will relieve the stress load of the employees whom I supervise.

Data Collection:

In order to determine what data should be acquired to do an analysis of the T&R backlog and its processes, a full understanding of the variables that are instrumental in dealing with our backlog and can impact the outcome of our backlog was needed.

These are the variables I have identified that deals with and influences backlog business days processing:

1. T&R Mail Tracking System – this is an excel reporting system in which the T&R employees use to track and make notes referencing processing information on paperwork that's mail-in by tracked means (FEDEX, UPS, USPS Certified mail), and the call center uses on occasions to reference to the called in customers as to where their paperwork is located in the processing stage. (Appendix A)

- 2. Title Work Breakdown before processing the daily mail the title work is broken down alphabetically by customers' names in batches for delivery to the employees to work.
- 3. Vet for Success Program this is a program set in place between the Veterans Administration and the State in which military veterans receive assistance getting hired on by State agencies.
- 4. Employee Leave annual and sick leave taken by the employees throughout the year.
- 5. Backlog Reporting this is an excel reporting system in which supervisors use to report weekly backlog business days for the Deputy Director's review. (Appendix B)
- 6. Dealerships Sales U.S. sales figures for the overall auto industry. (Appendix D)
- 7. Payday Loan Agencies loan applications for the banking industry.

Data Analysis:

During my analysis I used both report analysis and interviews with fellow employees to gauge their ideas on how to eliminate waste, time and effort in order to help maintain our backlog processing time within 3 to 5 business days year round. <u>T&R Mail Tracking</u>

<u>System</u> (see Appendix A)

As I previously stated, this is our reporting system in which the T&R employees use to track and make notes on mailed in tracked paperwork and the call center uses to see what has happened to the paperwork. This tracking system was created to assist both the customer and our call center to understand where mailed in paperwork was located in the T&R process. As you can see in Appendix A, T&R reports who mailed in the paperwork, the VIN number of the vehicle, whether we processed it or not, (if we did not process it

we make note of the file number to the rejection letter we mailed back to the customer)

"Other" special notes, the date we handled the work and the employee's initials who

processed the work. This tracking by our T&R employees is time consuming but is very

necessary for us because it helps the call center in its quest to quickly find out if the

paperwork was received, if it was rejected and the rejection letter file number or to see if

paperwork was processed. After careful analysis on what changes I thought we could

possibly make, I referred to my Lead to ask what her thoughts were on the Tracking

System and what we report. Her response was:

I believe a way to reduce the time factor with employees reporting information in the tracker is to only report information in the tracker if we reject the paperwork. I say this because if the paperwork is processed the call center can easily pull the vehicle up in our DMV system which shows the date it was processed. The call center problem was that they couldn't find our rejection letters in the DMV system because the name may differ on the rejection letter from who mailed in the work. By T&R only noting the rejected paperwork in the tracker this will help our T&R employees with more time spent on paperwork and less on unnecessarily tracking processed work reporting. (SCDMV T&R, Lead)

After analysis of this and conferring with the call center supervisors it was brought to my attention the only time the call center agents would refer to the T&R Mail Tracker was when they could not find the vehicle that the customer was calling about in our DMV system. When this occurs, call center agents would go to the T&R Mail Tracker to see if the paper work was rejected. This analysis finding falls in line with my Lead and my thought process of only rejected tracked information is needed in the T&R mail tracker.

Title Work Breakdown

Each day an employee is scheduled to break down the title work alphabetically by customers' names so they can be delivered in alphabetical batches to the T&R employees to work. When I became supervisor of the T&R department, I often wondered the purpose of breaking down the title work in this manner and just recently, because of this CPM project, I spoke with the supervisor that used to work in this area who was familiar with this process to find out why this process was put in place. Her response was:

We broke down the title work alphabetically so that we knew what agent was working on what particular alphabet during a certain time period. This purpose was serve just in case a customer, whose package was not tracked, called in an asked who was processing their work during a particular time frame their work would have come in. I as a supervisor could look at what employee received that alphabet and go directly to that employee to see if that customer's paperwork was in their work or whether they remember seeing the customer's paperwork. That was the sole purpose of breaking the work down alphabetically. It was a sort of tracking mechanism for our regular mail that's not tracked. (SCDMV HQ, supervisor)

After analysis of this, I realized since I have been here that particular question (someone called in and asked who was processing their work for a particular date) may have only been asked once or maybe twice. Even in those two instances, we did not locate that customer's mail by this process. By removing the title work breakdown from our process it will free up an employee each day of the two to three hours it took breaking down the work. This employee's time will now be well spent on processing incoming

mailed in transactions. This change will help our backlog.

Vet for Success Program

I must admit I was not too keen on this program that was set in place between the Veterans Administration and the State in which military veterans receive assistance getting hired on by State agencies. My hesitation was due to some of the bad experiences I've heard from other supervisors. Comments such as, "the Vet I hired is more out on medical appointments than at work" or "the Vet I hired has been more a constant aggravation because of their complaints about the workload than they have been more so instrumental in our work success". I have 14 full time employees that I have to supervise (evaluate, train, keep up with attendance, keep track of their time...etc.) and I did not want to add other personnel to some of the aggravation that comes with supervising.

For three years I have stayed away from the program after hearing other supervisor's complaints about the veterans they brought on board. But now I've brought on a veteran through the program and found out that like all employees, each come with their own personality and work ethic. Fortunately, the veteran I've brought on board thus far has been a help and not a hindrance on our work load. But that is in the initial hiring stages so we will reevaluate this employee and see how they affect our performance during our high backlog months.

Employee Leave

Often times throughout the year I have allowed employees to take leave when they requested it which sometimes cause the T&R department to have three to five employees out on leave of the 14 employees within the department. I have now mandated that only two employees on any given day can now request leave for a full day. I have given the

employees access to review my leave calendar that is freely open at my desk so that they can plan their leave accordingly and know what days are available ahead of time. This new leave process will help maintain our backlog during May through June and November through January when most employees take leave because of school spring breaks, summer vacations and holidays.

Backlog Reporting

Backlog reporting is an excel reporting system in which supervisors of sections within the Titles and Registration Division use to report their weekly business day backlog workload for the Deputy Director's review and other departments' use and availability. (See Appendix B). This report shows what mail-in date a particular section within the Titles and Registration Division is working on. This reporting mechanism also shows a breakdown of each functioning area's backlog within a supervisor's section. This backlog in appendix B is a reflection of our section, T&R, for the week ending June 26th, 2015. As you can see by the column that states "Backlog Range" we are clearly outside our goal of 3 to 5 business days in the functioning area of Disabled Plates, Duplicates/Lien Recording/Corrections/Title Onlys, Miscellaneous and Titles and Registration. As indicated in this research report this extreme backlog during this time of the year has been the norm for T&R.

Please refer to appendix C. Looking at this graph it shows a history of our backlog days for the past three years to date (2013 -2016). As you can see the peaks and valleys somewhat tell a story. The higher peaks are during the summer months and winter months. But this chart does not clearly show a true picture of T&R's backlog performance throughout the years because each time the backlog mounts, it is at that time

that our department receives help from outside departments as was discussed earlier.

When this happens there is a deep valley to follow. For example, starting in November 2014 the backlog started to rise quickly to a backlog 10 day average in December 2014. But in January through February of 2015 we received help from outside departments which drastically brought our backlog back down to 5 days in March 2015. Although the report reflects high peaks during May through July and November through January, it does not reflect what the year would truly entail because of help we receive throughout the year. It creates false valleys that were not created by T&R alone but with assistance at times from other departments throughout the year. But at this valley point it is up to T&R to then maintain the backlog until it can no longer be maintained and peaks out of control again.

Dealerships Sales & Payday Loan Agencies

Dealership Sales and Payday Loan Agencies play a tremendous factor in our backlog. They are the customers who submit the majority of the mailed in work. U.S. sales figures for the overall auto industry from 2010 to 2015 are reflected in appendix D. This report shows that the summer months and December are the car industry's highest growth months in sales. This has a direct correlation on our backlog report because of the influx of new car titles our department will now receive by mail to title and register in the new buyer's name. Just like car dealership numbers in sales peak during the summer months and December, so do Payday Loan Agencies. Agencies such as Carolina Title Loans, Inc. and Springleaf Financial process so many loans on a daily basis that they mail in their title loan applications in packets to our department. I recently sat down with an employee with Springleaf Financial and ask what part of the year do they feel

they process the most payday loans and why. Her response was:

We're constantly processing payday loans daily to the public. Based on our number of loans I'll say our biggest times of the year for payday loans are during the summer months because of school graduations and family vacations and during the holidays especially around Christmas. We also offer most of our special promotional benefit loans during these times of the seasons too which causes our numbers to increase also during this time. (Springleaf Financial, employee)

Although we are constantly getting their mailed in work throughout the year, we see that dealership sales and payday loan agencies' highest mail in intake is during our backlog increase period. Although this is not a preventable trend, T&R must recognize this when planning the workload during this time period. T&R must prepare accordingly for this spike in work during this period from these types of customers.

Implementation Plan:

In analyzing the data, the implementation of various proposed changes will require a change in the way we are currently doing business as described during the analyzing data phase of this paper. Plus there are several other implementations that will be put in effect that should create greater production while preventing errors and excessive backlogging. To develop this strategic vision of where T&R needs to head we will have to set objectives and use them as yardsticks to measure our performance and progress. By crafting this strategy we hope to achieve the desired outcome which is to keep the backlog at a reasonable level and move T&R along the course that our analysis has charted. We will do this by monitoring developments and initiating adjustments.

As discussed earlier there are several changes that I will sit down with my T&R team

to explain the proposed changes that will take affect immediately and they are as follows:

- 1. We will not report all work (processed and rejected) in the mail tracker. We will only report rejected tracked package information as needed. Because we tend to processed 20 times the amount of work as opposed to rejects this will now free up more time on processing.
- 2. We are removing the alphabetically title work breakdown from our daily task.

 This frees up an employee now for one to two hours daily to process more incoming mailed work.
- 3. We will hire a Veteran from the Vet Success program which adds another person to address the workload.
- 4. We will mandate our departmental leave policy which states that only two employees are allowed on leave during the same period. This will cut down on the excessive leave that takes place during the summer and holiday seasons.

There are additional implementations that I will discuss during the team meeting that will also take effect immediately and they are as follows:

- 1. We will now have the employees on a daily basis report the number of transactions they have processed and the amount they have left from their workload at close of business. (see Appendix E) By doing this it will let the employees know that management is looking more intensely at their production and processing habits. This implementation will keep the employees on their best behavior towards performance and prevent employee inefficiency.
- 2. I will propose to our Deputy Director to permanently implement that, on unusual large mail-in days, we place all hands on deck on the workload. In other words, all

employees that fall up under the Deputy Director's leadership that have access to processing title work will receive a certain amount of transactions from the large mail-in to process for one hour on that day until that number has been reduced.

With any proposals and new implementations, there will always be potential obstacles. It will be up to management during this change to be proactive and ensure purposeful actions on our part and as-needed reactions to unanticipated developments and conditions.

Evaluation Method:

After a meeting with the T&R department employees and instructing the department on the changes that are taking place and initiating the changes, the evaluation period will begin from the time of the initial implementation meeting, September 2015 and will continue up until January 2016. This will allow the department to see if the implemented changes indeed were a success or if further analysis of brought about concerns are needed. Of course, the end result the department is looking for is to see if we can consistently as a department keep the workload backlog down between three to five days during the November to December time period which has always been a tumultuous back log time period for our mailed in transactions. After all the analysis and communication have been done, our success is pending only on the outcome of the backlog numbers staying consistently below 6 days.

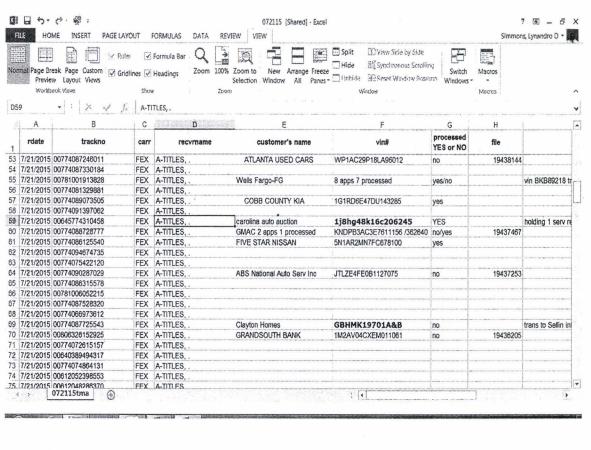
Summary and Recommendations:

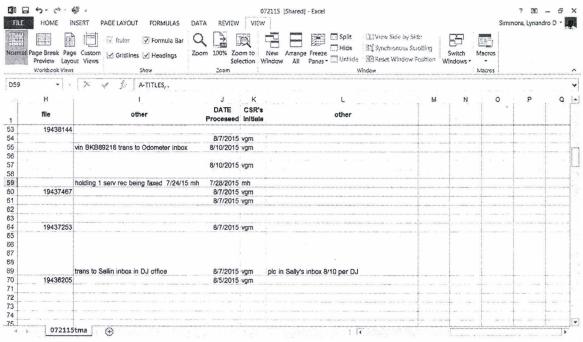
In conclusion, the results of this project have been successful. So far our backlog has maintained itself at three to five business days throughout the evaluation period (See appendix C). The changes that were implemented have worked without fail. For the first

time under my supervision we have entered the month of January at or under five days backlog (See appendix F & G). Not reporting all work (processed and rejected) in the mail tracker has been a huge success with the employees. Reporting only rejected work in the tracker has increase the employees' productivity immensely. They have asked why this change wasn't initiated sooner. Also as mentioned earlier, by removing the alphabetical title work breakdown task from our daily assignment has freed up an employee each day for one to two hours more to process more incoming mailed work. The Veteran we hired temporarily through the Vet for Success program has helped our productivity too; so much that when a permanent position became available she was hired into it. We are now looking for another Veteran for our now open temporary position.

Other implemented changes have worked out as well. Our policy mandate on departmental leave have been met with no backlash. However, I did allow four employees off the day before Thanksgiving but it didn't cause a backlash on our backlog reporting numbers. Also, by having the employees on a daily basis report their daily production at close of business has kept the employees on their best behavior towards performance and I have even notice an increase in productivity on a couple of our employees since this change. This project overall has been so successful that due to its success other department supervisors have asked for my assistance on their backlog.

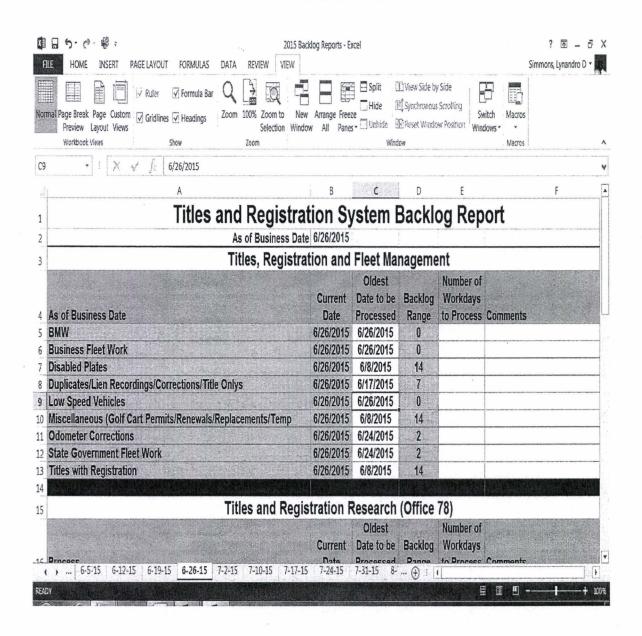
T&R Mail Tracking System





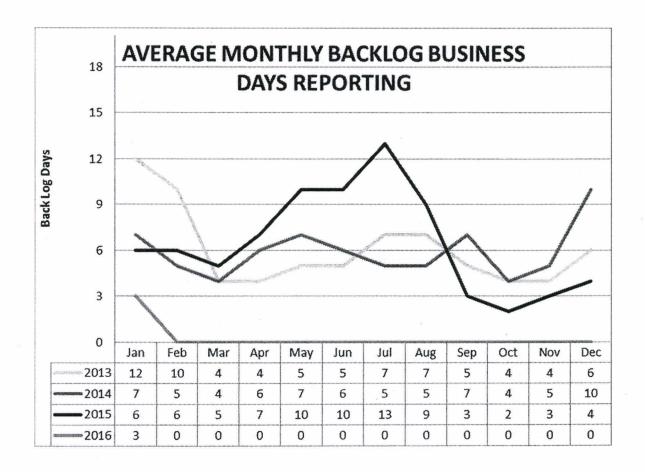
Appendix A

Backlog Reporting



Appendix B

Back Log Days 2013 - 2016



Appendix C

Dealership Sales

Month U.S. To Market Sales 20		U.S. Total Market Sales 2011	U.S. Total Market Sales 2012	U.S. Total Market Sales 2013	U.S. Total Market Sales 2014	U.S. Total Market Sales 2015
January	698,986	819,886	913,317	1,043,192	1,011,187	1,152,480
February	780,422	993,566	1,149,547	1,192,299	1,192,467	1,258,570
March	1,066,298	1,246,662	1,404,699	1,453,038	1,537,270	1,545,710
April	982,263	1,157,923	1,184,567	1,285,446	1,391,303	1,455,242
May	1,103,043	1,061,835	1,334,642	1,443,311	1,609,678	1,634,952
June	983,781	1,053,263	1,285,499	1,403,121	1,421,963	1,476,472
July	1,050,140	1,059,726	1,153,759	1,313,844	1,435,543	1,510,941
August	997,522	1,072,387	1,285,292	1,501,294	1,586,374	1,577,971
September	959,008	1,053,770	1,188,899	1,137,206	1,245,786	
October	950,250	1,021,185	1,092,294	1,206,182	1,281,132	
November	873,367	994,786	1,143,916	1,243,852	1,302,685	
December	1,144,806	1,243,784	1,356,070	1,358,734	1,507,928	

http://www.goodcarbadcar.net/2012/10/usa-auto-industry-total-sales-figures.html

Appendix D

Daily Workload Employee Report

Raven

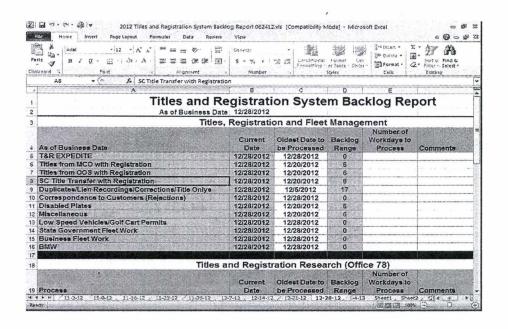
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Tue	10/20	Сţ	29			17						
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	Average Trans per employee											
	Total Transaction as a Dept we should be doing daily											
- 1	Total Transaction as a Dept we should be doing daily 750											

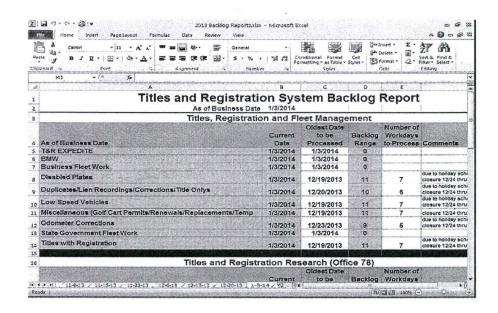
Registration Goal = 45 transactions FLTs Goal = 75 transactions Title Only Goal = 55 transactions Track Title Only Goal = 50 transactions

CSR NOTES:

Appendix E

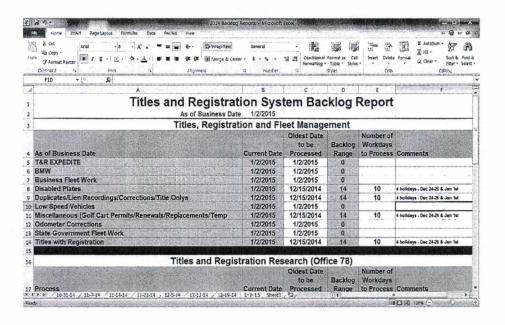
Backlog Report Comparison (Dec 2012 & Jan 2014)

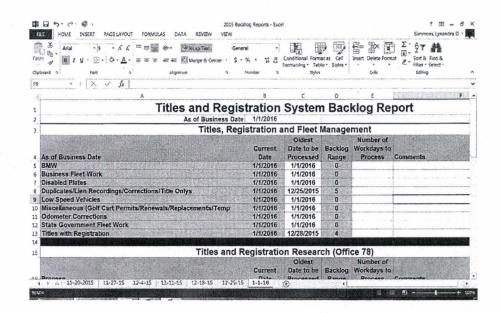




Appendix F

Backlog Report Comparison (Jan 2015 & Jan 2016)





Appendix G